

REMARKS

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the Office action mailed October 3, 2005. With entry of this amendment, claims 1-23 are pending. In the Office action, the Examiner allowed claims 21-23; rejected claims 1-4 and 8-13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ohtsuka et al. (US Patent 5,357,928); rejected claims 14, 15, 19, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Koga et al. (US Patent 5,657,625); rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuka et al. (5,357,928) in view of Surnilla (US Patent 6,543,219); and objected to claims 6, 7, 16, 17, and 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In this response, applicants have amended claims 1, 8 and 14; canceled claims 6, 11 and 18; and added new claims 24-27.

Formal Matters

Applicants thank the Examiner for carefully considering the subject application. As requested, Applicants have amended claim 14 to correct the noted informalities objected to.

Claim 1

The Examiner has indicated that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 6. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Page 8 – AMENDMENT

Serial No. 10/064,008; Record ID 81046443

Claims 8 and 11

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuka (US Patent 5,357,928). Claim 8 has been amended to include various elements of claim 11. While the Office action has applied Ohtsuka to claim 11, it fails to make any assertion that Ohtsuka shows the elements of Claim 11. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 8 be withdrawn.

Claim 14

The Examiner has indicated that claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 14 to include the limitations of claim 18. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 14 be withdrawn.

Claim 24

The Examiner has indicated that claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have added new independent claim 24 which includes the limitations of claim 7 and includes all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 25

The Examiner has indicated that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants

have added new independent claim 25 which includes the limitations of claim 17 and includes all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 26

The Examiner has indicated that claim 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have added new independent claim 26 which includes the limitations of claim 16 and includes all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 27

Applicants have added new independent claim 27 which includes the limitations of claim 5 and includes all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Office action rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuka et al. (US Patent 5,357,928) in view of Surnilla (US Patent 6,543,219). However, the Surnilla reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Under 35 U.S.C. §103(c), Surnilla is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103. Specifically, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of the applied reference and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person. As such, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 5 be withdrawn.

Based on the foregoing comments, the above-identified application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is courteously solicited. If any further amendment is necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable condition, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by fax or telephone at the number listed below.

Page 10 – AMENDMENT

Serial No. 10/064,008; Record ID 81046443

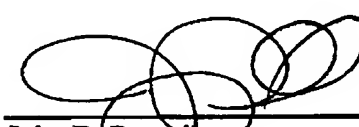
Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this Amendment, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No.06-1510. If there are insufficient funds in this account, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1505.

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office at (571) 273-8300 on December 30, 2005.


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